

Appl. No. : 10/624,984
Filed : July 22, 2003

REMARKS

By way of summary, Claims 1–31 are pending in the present application. Applicant gratefully acknowledges the indication that Claims 1–19 are in condition for allowance. By this Amendment, Claim 26 is amended and Claim 31 is added. As set forth below, Applicant believes that Claims 20–31 are in condition for allowance at this time. In response to the Office Action mailed August 9, 2004, Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to reconsider the above-captioned application in view of the following comments.

The Application Information of the Two Co-Pending Applications in the Information Disclosure Statement Is Provided Herein

The Examiner did not consider two co-pending applications listed in the Information Disclosure Statement that was submitted with the application. The Examiner noted that the Applicant did not provide the application information of the references. The two references, numbers 36 and 37 of the Information Disclosure Statement, are the same references identified in paragraph [0067] of the specification, which Applicant has amended herein. As identified in the amendment, the co-pending applications are U.S. Application Ser. Nos. 10/624,204 and 10/619,095. As suggested by the Examiner, Applicant is submitting herewith (1) another 1449-PTO form that properly lists the two applications and (2) copies of the two applications for the Examiner's convenience. Consideration of these two co-pending applications is respectfully requested.

The Specification Has Been Corrected

Through the amendments set forth above, the paragraph objected to by the Examiner has been corrected. The changes do not add new matter. Entry of the amended specification paragraph is respectfully requested.

Claims 20–30 Are Not Anticipated By Uehara

Claims 20–30 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Uehara et al., (U.S. Patent No. 4,897,554). Applicant has carefully reviewed the reference and respectfully disagrees with the basis for the rejection.

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Claim 20 recites, among other limitations, “a common operating device that provides the control device with at least an initiation signal to activate the starting devices,” and, “the control device activating each starting device when the operating device provides the initiation signal.” Accordingly, the starting device of each engine is activated by the control device when the common operating device provides the initiation signal.

In contrast, Uehara teaches an engine system that is configured to start two engines in series. For example, as shown in Figure 3, Uehara teaches a system that starts a first engine, and upon confirmation that the first engine has started, the system proceeds to start the second engine. This process is explained in the specification as follows: “In step s-9, the CPU checks whether or not the first engine 29 is designated. If the answer is positive, the CPU performs the first engine start procedure in step s-10, otherwise it performs the second engine start procedure in step s-17.” Col. 3, lines 39–44. Accordingly, Uehara does not teach a system in which the control device activates the starting device of each engine when the common operating device provides the initiation signal, and therefore, Uehara does not anticipate Claim 20.

Amended Claim 26 is not anticipated by Uehara for at least the same reasons as explained above with respect to Claim 20. The amended claim recites, among other limitations, “a control circuit that is responsive to operator actuation of the auto-start switch by concurrently activating the respective starter motors of each of a plurality of engines.” Uehara does not teach a system that is responsive to operator actuation of the auto-start switch by concurrently activating the respective starter motors of each engine.

Uehara explains that if the first engine is not able to start, the engine ignition system terminates without attempting ignition of the second engine: “In the case that the result in step s-12 is true, the CPU terminates the engine starting operation after displaying that the first engine 29 is not started in spite of three attempts.” Col. 3, lines 59–62. Accordingly, any problem with the second engine will not be identified until the first engine is able to start, as ignition of the second engine is attempted only after the first engine has started. Uehara thus fails to disclose, inter alia, a system that concurrently starts two or more engines.

For at least these reasons, Claims 20 and 26 are not anticipated by Uehara. Additionally, Claims 21–25 depend from Claim 20 and Claims 27–30 depend from Claim 26. These dependent claims each contain additional subject matter and are not anticipated by Uehara for at

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least the same reasons as identified in Claims 20 and 26. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of Claims 20–30 is respectfully requested.

New Claim 31 Distinguishes Over The Applied Prior Art

New method Claim 31 has been added and recites, among other limitations, “activating each starting device when the operating device provides the initiation signal, sensing an individual start completion state of each engine with a sensing device, and deactivating each starting device in response to the sensing device sensing the individual start completion state of the respective engine.” The applied reference does not disclose, teach, or suggest such a method, and consideration and allowance of Claim 31 is respectfully requested for at least these reasons.

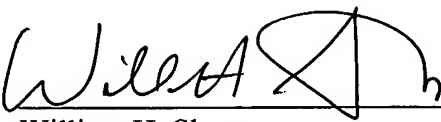
CONCLUSION

The undersigned has made a good faith effort to respond to all of the rejections in the case and to place the claims in condition for immediate allowance. Nevertheless, if any undeveloped issues remain or if any issues require clarification, the Examiner is respectfully requested to call Applicant's attorney, William H. Shreve at (949) 760-0404, in order to resolve such issue promptly. Please charge any additional fees, including any fees for additional extension of time, or credit overpayment to Deposit Account No. 11-1410.

Respectfully submitted,

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